

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

FRANCISCO VEGA, JR.,

Case No. 1:22-cv-00471-JLT-EPG (PC)

Plaintiff,

ORDER REQUIRING PARTIES TO EXCHANGE DOCUMENTS

V.

M. SOTO, et al.,

Defendant(s).

Francisco Vega, Jr., (“Plaintiff”) is a state prisoner proceeding *pro se* in this civil rights action filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

On March 3, 2023, the Court issued an order requiring the parties to file scheduling and discovery statements. (ECF No. 34, *see* ECF No. 36). The parties have now filed their statements. (ECF Nos. 38, 41).

The Court has reviewed this case and the parties' statements. In an effort to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive disposition of this action,¹ the Court will direct that certain documents that are central to the dispute be promptly produced.²

¹ See, e.g., *United States v. W.R. Grace*, 526 F.3d 499, 508-09 (9th Cir. 2008) (“We begin with the principle that the district court is charged with effectuating the speedy and orderly administration of justice. There is universal acceptance in the federal courts that, in carrying out this mandate, a district court has the authority to enter pretrial case management and discovery orders designed to ensure that the relevant issues to be tried are identified, that the parties have an opportunity to engage in appropriate discovery and that the parties are adequately and timely prepared so that the trial can proceed efficiently and intelligibly.”).

² Advisory Committee Notes to 1993 Amendment to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure regarding Rule 26(a) (“The enumeration in Rule 26(a) of items to be disclosed does not prevent a court from requiring by order or local rule that the parties disclose additional information without a discovery request.”).

1 Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that:

2 1. Each party has sixty days from the date of service of this order to serve opposing
3 parties, or their counsel, if represented, with copies of the following documents
4 and/or evidence that they have in their possession, custody, or control, to the
5 extent the parties have not already done so:³

6 a. Documents regarding exhaustion of Plaintiff's claims, including 602s,
7 Form 22s, and responses from the appeals office.

8 b. All documents regarding the Rules Violation Report associated with the
9 incident(s) alleged in the complaint, including disciplinary charges and
10 findings.

11 c. Witness statements and evidence that were generated from
12 investigation(s) related to the event(s) at issue in the complaint, such as
13 an investigation stemming from the processing of Plaintiff's
14 grievance(s).⁴

15 d. Video recordings and photographs related to the incident(s) at issue in
16 the complaint, if any,⁵ including video recordings and photographs of
17 Plaintiff taken following the incident(s).⁶

18 2. If any party obtains documents and/or other evidence described above later in
19 the case from a third party, that party shall provide all other parties with copies

21 ³ Defense counsel is requested to obtain these documents from Plaintiff's institution(s) of confinement. If
22 defense counsel is unable to do so, defense counsel should inform Plaintiff that a third party subpoena is required.

23 ⁴ See *Woodford v. Ngo*, 548 U.S. 81, 94-95 (2006) ("[P]roper exhaustion improves the quality of those
24 prisoner suits that are eventually filed because proper exhaustion often results in the creation of an administrative
record that is helpful to the court. When a grievance is filed shortly after the event giving rise to the grievance,
witnesses can be identified and questioned while memories are still fresh, and evidence can be gathered and
preserved.").

25 The Court notes that Defendant(s) only need to produce documents such as a Confidential Appeal Inquiry
26 or a Use of Force Critique to the extent those documents contain witness statements related to the incident(s)
alleged in the complaint and/or evidence related to the incident(s) alleged in the complaint that will not be
provided to Plaintiff separately.

27 ⁵ Defendants represent that there are no video recordings or photographs at issue. (ECF No. 38, p. 3 –
"Defendants are not aware of any video recordings or photographs related to the incident at issue in this lawsuit.").

28 ⁶ If Plaintiff is not allowed possess, or is unable to play, video recording(s), defense counsel shall work
with staff at Plaintiff's institution of confinement to ensure that Plaintiff is able to view the video recording(s).

1 of the documents and/or evidence within thirty days.

2 3. Parties do not need to produce documents or evidence that they have already
3 produced.

4 4. Parties do not need to produce documents or evidence that were provided to
5 them by the opposing party.

6 5. Parties may object to producing any of the above-listed documents and/or
7 evidence. Objections shall be filed with the Court and served on all other parties
8 within sixty days from the date of service of this order (or within thirty days of
9 receiving additional documents and/or evidence). The objection should include
10 the basis for not providing the documents and/or evidence. If Defendant(s)
11 object based on the official information privilege, Defendant(s) shall follow the
12 procedures described in the Court's scheduling order. If a party files an
13 objection, all other parties have fourteen days from the date the objection is filed
14 to file a response. If any party files a response to an objection, the Court will
15 issue a ruling on the objection.

16 IT IS SO ORDERED.

17 18 Dated: April 26, 2023

19 /s/ *Eric P. Groj*
20 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE